



"THE  
HARVEST  
INDEED  
IS  
GREAT,  
BUT  
THE  
LABORERS  
ARE  
FEW.  
"PRAY  
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THEREFORE



THE  
LORD  
OF  
THE  
HARVEST,  
THAT  
HE  
SEND  
LABORERS  
INTO  
HIS  
HARVEST."

St. Luke x-2

# The Messenger of Our Lady of Africa

PUBLISHED BY

THE WHITE SISTERS OF AFRICA

METUCHEN,

::

::

NEW JERSEY

# The Messenger of Our Lady of Africa



Published and edited with ecclesiastical approbation bi-monthly by the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (White Sisters), Metuchen, N. J.

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Dear Reverend Mother:

I am indeed pleased to recommend most heartily the Apostolic work of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa. You are laboring in your own quiet way, and in accordance with the wishes of our Holy Father, Pius XI, gloriously reigning, solely that Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, may be better known and better loved by those for whom he gave His life on the Cross that all men might have life, and have it more abundantly.

Any assistance given you will be rewarded by the Saviour Himself, who has promised: "Whosoever shall give a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward." I am sure such a labor of love needs no further commendation to the good priests and faithful people of the Diocese of Trenton.

Wishing you every blessing in your noble work, I beg to remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ MOSES E. KILEY,

Bishop of Trenton.

July 24, 1934.

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For Information apply to Rev. Mother Superior, 319 Middlesex Avenue, Metuchen, N. J.

## The Lepers

EVERY COUNTRY has had its great apostles: The Jesuit Martyrs in Canada — St. Francis Xavier in India — Blessed Theophane Venard in China — Cardinal LAVIGERIE (Our Founder) in Africa and many others could be cited. Our sketch to-day is about Father DAMIAN in the Island of Molokai.

Joseph De Veuster known to the world as Father Damian of Molokai was born on the 3rd of January, 1840; his home was in Tremeloo, a typical Flemish village, not many miles from Louvain. When I was a little girl, I lived in Belgium, and there I first heard of his great work. Little did I think that I should one day work among the lepers myself, and see what they suffer, and how they need help. Now I understand Father Damian's answer to the Hawaiian Government that wanted to pay him: "If you gave me a hundred thousand dollars to do what I am doing I would not stay here 5 minutes . . ." and these other words: "It is true, my children are hideous to look at, but their souls have been redeemed by Our Saviour's Precious Blood." What made Father Damian's life an agony was loneliness; the only white man amidst poor savages, the only healthy one among deformed, the only learned one among ignorant. After eight years during which he used all his strength doing everything for his poor children (even their coffins of which he made more than 1,500) his own martyrdom began . . . the symptoms were unmistakable his hair and eyebrows were falling, his lips became swollen, and one evening placing his feet into very hot water he noted he was conscious of no pain the anaesthesia of leprosy had set in. The news leaked out and every one in Molokai was desolated. Father they said: now you are like us . . . He wrote: *God knows what was best for my sanctification: heartily and peacefully do I repeat: Thy holy will be done.*

Quite different is the life of a White Sister nursing the lepers: in Nyasaland (British East Africa) where I spent six years we have in Mua, a leper asylum. It consists of a large dispensary with two wards, and huts have been built all around: this place is near the river; the soil is good and it enables the poor lepers to cultivate sweet potatoes - ground nuts - and other native vegetables. All enjoy this light manual work except those who have lost their fingers; even when crippled they kneel to dig. When Mother A. arrives there in the morning she has a godly smile, and a kind word for each one. After having changed her dress, she enters the ward

where only a few beds are occupied, because the poor negroes are very fond of air and sun; they stay inside only when death is near. Two native infirmarians are attached to the dispensary. They keep it tidy and help to dress the wounds. This morning one is holding the tray with the necessary things for the injections. Those injections should be given twice a week, they are made from creosote and hydnoceol. (this word comes from Hydnocarpus the name of the tree which gives this precious oil.) When injected at the first period of the disease and regularly for many months the results are most encouraging; the wounds are drying up, fingers and toes cease to fall off, the deep wrinkles are reduced, strength is coming back. Noticing these happy changes they believe themselves cured, and go back to their village. But their illusions are soon dispelled; the wounds reappear, they feel extremely tired; sometimes their face takes such an old expression, girls of 20 look 40; their people neglect them, then they undertake the journey back to Mua.



Care Given to the Poor Lepers

We have in fact two classes of lepers: in-patients and out-patients. The former live in camp altogether, we feed, lodge, and clothe them as well as we can. In their case the effect of Hydnoceol injections is often striking; the progress of the disease is checked. Many of these patients are incurable, because the disease was far advanced when we took them.

Their great wish is to remain with us until death . . . Why? because Negroes have a very high idea of a decent funeral, and they know if they were to die in a native village their bodies would be thrown in the forest to be eaten by wild animals, or left purposely near an ant-hill. But here the poor lepers are buried with the Church's ritual and followed to the grave by their companions in suffering.

It is a great consolation for our incurables to know that a priest will bless the grave in which they will rest beneath a cross, awaiting the glorious day of Resurrection.

Why have you "out patients", perhaps are you thinking? At times because we have no room, at other times for what is called "family reasons". If a poor leper has someone in his village who still cares for him (it happens in Christian families) he easily feels homesick, and wants a little change. Negroes have a great love for their Mother, some when very ill, and assisted by their wife, go on repeating "Ndifuna Amai wanga" I want my Mummy. Their attendance being irregular, they make less satisfactory progress than the in-patients.

How and why does leprosy spread so much? For  
(Continued on Page 177)

# The Gekouyou

## Study of a People -- Their

[Continued]

### MENTALITY

**T**HE NATIVES of Gekouyou are black. They are tall, strong and agile. This people has never been conquered, never bent under the yoke of a ruler and the Gekouyou is independent, proud, arrogant and pugnacious. He is difficult to civilize.



Young Girl of the Gekouyou Tribe

He can live next to the white man for years without attempting to imitate his way of clothing or his manner of living. His neighbor the Kavirondo, who in his own village is content with the most primitive of dress, adopts that of the white man after a few months among Europeans and displays more or less taste in his manner of wearing it. In his enthusiasm to assume the appearance of a gentleman, he will wear smoked glasses to protect his eyes from the sun and he carries a cane or an umbrella.

I have known a Kavirondo to build something like a hut, but without the usual straw roof, "What can it be?" one wonders.

It is a bath room, however incredible that may seem, but without a bath tub of course. He has made a clothes rack of three poles, two driven into the earth and the other laid across these. On this he dries his Sunday shirt and trousers every Monday morning.

I have digressed from my subject in order to attempt to prove that Africa, in its physical and moral aspects, is a land of contrasts — in the character of the inhabitants, their manners and their mentality.

These contrasts often mislead the readers of adventures in Africa. One explorer sees a desolate land cursed with the curse of Cham, a country whose

forests give no shade, whose gardens are without flowers, whose rivers are dry. Whereas another compares Africa to the land of Chanaan flowing with milk and honey.

The existence of these contrasts explains the difference between our Mission in Gekouyou where the Missionary after long months of tremendous efforts has not won a single soul for Christ, and that of Buganda where the natives respond in large numbers to the call of Christianity and become faithful neophytes, ready to give up their lives for their Faith.

**Clothing.** — The Gekouyou whose clothing used to consist of the skin of an animal, now wears a loose garment, which must be gray or red, tied over the right shoulder. He wears it until it is in tatters. The women, even here are more elegantly attired. Besides a belt which reaches to the knee made of skin, another larger skin hangs from one shoulder partly concealing the upper part of the body and affording protection from the cold. This will also be a cozy nest in which the mother holds her sleeping babe. The young women and those whom age has not robbed of their vanity, wear a long skin dress cut like a fish tail and which whips against their calves when they walk. This always reminded me of the spur a rider uses to urge on his horse. These skins are well cured with castor-oil and red earth until they become soft as cloth and rustle like silk. When a tear appears, it is hidden with a round patch edged with white beads, thus adding to the value of the garment. The young girls and the prospective brides often wear crowns, brass trinkets and leather neck bands, close-fitting and studded with beads. As ear rings, they wear as many as ten large beaded rings which would be very uncomfortable were they not held in place by a narrow strap across the forehead and around the head.

**Ornaments.** — Brass bracelets cover the arm from wrist to elbow and the leg from the instep half way to the knee.

To acquire these bracelets and have them placed on her arm, the girl must go through a rather extraordinary performance. Once the bracelet is there it must stay. The metal is heated. The girl is strongly tied to a tree. A third person holds her hand firmly while the smith winds the metal, which has become malleable in the heat, around and around her arm as often as she wishes. She must pay for every ring. I have seen old women who were still wearing the bracelets which had been fitted on their limbs when they were young.

The custom of completely shaving the scalp is becoming more popular than the old style of allowing the hair to grow or of leaving a tuft on the top of the head, the wisps of hair then being greased with castor-oil and red clay. This mode of hair-dressing is in favor with the young men when they are to take part in a dance.



# Gekouyou

## Their Manners and Customs

continued ]

Every one knows the "famous" Gekouyou ears. The women's ear lobes are not so disfigured as the men's. This deformation is an ornament and considered almost obligatory. By a series of successive operations the lobe of the ear, which European women sometimes pierce to hold an ear-ring, is enlarged and distended by the means of small sticks which are gradually replaced by larger ones until the loose flesh takes a cylindrical form and has the appearance of leather.

Among the young men, the Christians particularly have the good taste to forego this custom. And many old men among the Christians have had their ears cut and sewed of their own accord. This proves that they realize that such a custom is inconsistent with the dignity of their religion.

**Changes brought about by Christianity.** — The Missionaries forbid the neophytes to assist at the pagan festivals and nocturnal dances which are unseemly and immoral. They are warned before baptism that they must give up these practices. They are free to subscribe or not to these conditions.

The white gandoura is gradually replacing the filthy garments which the men used to wear when approaching the Communion Table. For two or three years now, the young men wear trousers and shirt or a sweater on festive occasions. This style is being generally adopted. If a young man is going to be married, he borrows here and there trousers, hat, stockings, or perhaps a pair of shoes. The most comical adjunct to their toilet is a piece of comb stuck into the hair on the right side of the head. Probably some young dandy found a broken comb in the European section of the settlement and he has made of this treasure the crowning glory of a smart

costume. Here, as every where, style dictates its laws.

**The Lance.** — A man with any self-respect never goes out without his lance. If he has none he carries a stick. It may be long or short, tastefully carved or plain, but such as it is, it is a mark of dignity. To rob a man's stick it is to risk a quarrel, it actually provokes a fight. It is an insult.

About thirty years ago the mountains of Gekouyou were the scene of continual razzias between tribes, the object of these raids being to carry off women and cattle. Now that the white man has "spoiled the country" as the natives say, these good times are over. The old men speak proudly of these great deeds of their youth.

Their old limbs lose their stiffness when they describe with appropriate gestures, war signals, alarms and the attack on a village with the resulting events.

It is to retain the illusion that he is still a warrior that the Gekouyou keeps his lance at hand in his poor smoky hut. He gazes at it lovingly but he can no more use it, as he did but too well formerly.

There are days, when longing to see his precious weapon shining in the sun-light, he proudly marches up hill and down dale to assist at a distant feast, to take part in a family palaver or just to stroll about the market places, grasping his trusty lance. Or, again, he will follow his scanty flock on the mountain paths, always with his lance at his side.

If two men come to blows, others are called to see fair play. The fight stops as soon as blood has been spilt. A sheep is given to the vanquished to compensate him for his loss of blood.

(To be continued)



## Investment 100 for 1

At St. Charles Orphanage, Africa, there are over a hundred of them who have but one fault: that of having a *ferocious appetite*.



Piously folding their little hands together, every day these dear little ones ask their protectress, the *Little Flower*, to shower heavenly roses on their benefactors who give them bread.



Bread for an orphan for a month \$1.00 ..... for a year \$10.00



Bread  
for my Lambs  
please

## News From Abroad

Marseille, France.

My dear Sister M. de Lorette,

I am so pleased to be able to come near you before sailing. Mother just gave me leave to write to my dear "Metuchen". Can you believe it I am going to the Mission, no words can express my joy, and I am just waiting for the departure call which will take place on Thursday 28th at 4 P. M. on board the general "Medsinger" . . . and then away we will sail, towards our dear Mission which will draw us closer to those "dear blackies".

Our caravan consists of six Sisters: three Dutch Sisters, a French Sister, an Italian Sister and I. Our Superior is Sister John . . . . . We are certainly fortunate to have her for our "Mother", we never could have found a better one, she has already spent twenty years in Tanganyka and is going back for the second time. She is so interesting and it is just a pleasure to hear her relate stories of her dear Mission. We also have Sister Lucia well known by your Superior, who is also going back for the second time, she has already twenty years of Mission life, you can imagine their joy in going back, but we can not blame them either . . . as for the others we are young professed Sisters of whom I have the honour and privilege to say that I am the youngest, but strong in the love and zeal for souls.

Now, for a bit of news . . . already a week since I have left my dear Community of twenty-two Sisters, and I can say it was with a sad heart I had to say "Good-bye" I have certainly enjoyed every minute of my short stay in London . . . Since my arrival at Marseille we have been kept very busy sewing and preparing our 'trousseau'. Every stitch was made with an act of love for my dear Blackies, whom I am longing to see and hope to love.

We also had the privilege of going on a pilgrimage to Notre Dame de la Garde, where we assisted at Mass; there I could commend and pray for the last time for all those I love and are dear to me . . . also your Community, and even for our dear Benefactors and the readers of the "Messenger".



Modes of Travel

I hope I will prepare the way and obtain many postulants from home in the near future. Do pray for me so that I may become a Missionary, not only in name but in deed, in return I promise a daily remembrance in my prayers.

P. S. My new Mission will be MOMBASA.

Sr. Angele de Foligno.



### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Miss K. Blum, Los Angeles, Calif., St. Patrick's High School, New Jersey, Mr. Brousseau, Canada, care of the lepers.

Sisters of St. Benedict, Pueblo, Colo., Mr. Brousseau, Canada, Miss Thibodeau, Nova Scotia, Miss M. Fahey, Red Bank, N. J., bread for a child.

Miss Hynes, Brooklyn, N. Y., thanksgiving for favour obtained.

A friend from New Brunswick, donation for the welfare of the African Missions.

A friend of Camden, N. J. and Atlantic City, N. J.

We also wish to thank all those who have sent cancelled stamps for the Missions.

Will You Do Your Part  
In Helping Us  
Spread The Light . . .



Your Subscription Renewal  
Would Be Appreciated.

## Guy de Fontgalland Bureau\*

Guy de Fontgalland Bureau continues to receive numerous letters relating many favors attributed to his intercession.

Guy's friends will be glad to hear about the process of his cause which goes forward confidently: of the two Dioceses interested in the cause of his beatification, one has completed the work. The authorities of Paris are waiting the end of their process to proceed to the exhumation of this privileged child.

Thanksgiving to "Little Guy" for favors received through his intercession: Miss Nadine Ford, Kirkland, Wyoming; Sister M. Valentine, St. Francis Hospital, Colorado Springs, Col.; Mrs. E. G. Swauk, 212 Buena Vista Street, Newark, Ohio.

Several favors have been attributed to this young Servant of God: 244 Conversions; 894 cures, so pronounced by the doctors in charge of those cases. 155,000 special graces obtained through his intercession . . .

May he become more and more the recruiting angel toward the sacerdotal and the religious life so that vocations trained in the knowledge and the love of Jesus Christ, numerous and worthy youth may emulate the "Little Guy" thus realizing the

prophetic words of saintly Pius X: "There will be Saints among children."

\*Relics, pictures and the life of the boy may be obtained at:

319 Middlesex Ave., Metuchen, New Jersey.



*Guy on His Death-bed*



## The Lepers - (Continued from page 173)

a long time it was believed to be hereditary, but according to the latest research and the experiences of many doctors, it is not. Leprosy is due to the bacillus of Hancen, and is transmitted by contamination, either by wearing clothes belonging to lepers: eating with hands out of the same dish: smoking the same pipe. All these deplorable habits are practised every day in Africa. How often have I seen a woman giving her healthy baby, to another whose hands were covered with the terrible disease; and this one would without fear share a banana with the child. These things make us shiver, but when we scold them for their imprudence they laugh "Amai" they say, we have always done like this, **don't you** touch them when you nurse them? — It is in fact wonderful that so many Sisters are nursing the lepers, and never contract it. We have six leper-asylums the most important ones in Tanganika — Nyassa and Sudan. Surely the precautions we take are a help, but I believe it is due to a special protection of Our Lady, to whom we pray so much in our Congregation. Let me add that no Sister is ever obliged to nurse lepers, but so many are asking for it, that the Reverend Mother General is never obliged to ask for one herself.

Is there anything attractive in such an atmosphere are you perhaps wondering? Naturally speaking I do not think so: even when not purulent, leprosy has a very disagreeable odor; but after a morning's work among such unfortunate creatures, a real happiness fills one soul, because charity for those destitute changes their heart. We are often edified by their faith patience and even their joy. I wish you could see them praying earnestly clasping their hands without fingers . . . And, at the Catechism lesson . . . how interested they are when we speak of Heaven; it is with a broad smile they say: "Sister, there we will be as white, and clean as you!"

Mother A. teaches them hygiene, too. One day

she told them: "I brought a basket of nice fish, you must wash it, and then cook it, it will be a fine Sunday dinner". — "Wash it? exclaimed some of them . . . Well, Sister, it has been for years in fresh water . . . is it not clean enough?"

His Excellency Bishop Guilleme, who has spent 50 years in Africa wrote in 1932 from Nyasaland: "It is almost certain that the treatment given at present in Muc, when given at the first period of the illness cures leprosy, and prevents the infection from spreading to others, this is in itself a great victory over a disease which is still a menace to white men, as well as to the blacks. When the camp first opened, its general atmosphere was one of gloom; all the patients wore the same expression of melancholy. But a wonderful change has come over our little colony. This change was brought by the obvious good results of the injections by the cheerful influence of the Fathers, and the Sisters who nurse them; but, above all by the consolation of Religion. We can say with truth that our lepers are happy, happy to think that they are not forgotten, happy in the knowledge that they will be buried like human beings and not cast out in the jungle."

Sister St. Stanislaus.

**To build a hut for a leper \$10.00**

**To support a leper in a hut for one month \$2.00**

## FROM A MITE TO A CHALICE

How worthy and sublime to offer a chalice for a Mission!

But during these days of depression it seems nearly beyond one's means. Absolutely not, just save and send your old silver or golden jewelry, relics and trinkets which are hoarded away and they shall be changed into a lovely chalice.

Your small sacrifice shall give you the grace to participate in the Sacrifice of all sacrifices — the Mass.



Berber Girl

## Brave Berber Girl

In a village of the Beni-Aissi tribe lived two Christian families, lost amongst the Mohammedans.

A widow lived with her only daughter, Mary, seven years of age. By means of hard work and economy, the young mother had managed to buy a goat which was led to the pasture by the child.

One day, the child passed near the *tajma't* (meeting-place where men talk business) where about twenty men were assembled.

One of them stopped the child:

— "You are going to say the *chaada*." (Mohammedan formula)

— "Never!" replied the little one, trying to run away.

— Say with me: "There is but one God and Mohammed is His prophet" repeated the Mohammedan.

Mary was silent.

Another man came near and drawing his sword from his belt said:

— "*CHAAD, CHAAD*, or I shall cut your neck!"

— "Kill me if you like; it is not Mohammed I love, it is Jesus Christ."

The Mohammedan seeing he was conquered by this weak child, was very angry and spit in the child's face. This insult was worse for Mary than the threats of death. She began to cry, finally she escaped and ran home.

"Weren't you afraid when you saw they wanted to kill you?" they asked her.

"Yes, I was dreadfully frightened, but I prayed to Our Blessed Mother, and the man hid his knife."

May the faith and confidence of this little berber girl, teach us to beseech Our Heavenly Mother in the trials of life.



### MISSION EXHIBITS

The Ninth National Convention of the Mission Crusade in Dubuque, has shown the great Mission spirit prevailing in this country. It was attended by over thirty Bishops and Archbishops, honoured by the presence of the Most Reverend Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, who in review of the mission expansion of the church from its Apostolic beginnings to the present day, pleaded for prayer, study and sacrifice for the Missions. The Missionaries have heard from the Crusaders of the different Units represented throughout the United States, the great zeal they are manifesting towards the missions; may their plans and resolutions for the future be blessed by God.

We wish to extend our sincere thanks for the cordial welcome and reception received in Dubuque, also for the many visitors who have shown interests in our works.

Other Mission Exhibits at Cleveland, Ohio, during the Eucharistic Congress, and at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, will take place in the near future. We are very grateful for having been invited to take part in these exhibits.

ALL are cordially invited to visit our booth.

### ECHOES OF AFRICA

#### MIDNIGHT ALARM

Kala, Tanganyika. — We were awakened last night by the roaring of a leopard under the windows of our dormitory. The beast had been attracted by the smell of a goat slaughtered in the evening. It climbed a tree and the branch breaking under its weight, it was hurled to the ground with a fearful noise. The leopard then jumped the wall of the farm-yard and strangled twenty-six goats.

### BAPTISMS

Toro, Uganda. — The Mission is celebrating a joyful day: 252 catechumens were baptized and made their First Communion. The ceremony lasted from half past seven until eleven o'clock. Four White Fathers administered the Sacrament of Baptism making these poor heathens children of God.

### A FIRST GLIMPSE OF CIVILIZATION

One day we saw two old women in the courtyard who were gazing open-mouthed at our house; a Sister went out and greeted them in Irak; they were thunder-struck: a white woman to know their language! They marveled at every word she said. They were afraid to approach the house, fearing, no doubt that it would collapse upon them. The Superior opened the door of the parlor and invited them to enter; they turned and ran. Looking back they changed their mind and trembling all over they decided to come in. The pictures on the wall were the objects of their wonder and admiration but when they saw the stairway their astonishment was really comical to see.

When we had explained to them that we had left our country and our parents to care for them and their countrymen, they expressed their gratitude and promised to return with their friends. May their visit be an occasion to awaken in their hearts a desire for the Truth.

### STAMPS! STAMPS!

The White Sisters would be grateful to all those who would send to them their cancelled stamps, tinfoil, etc.



